



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the
Interior

Death Valley National
Park

CA Highway 190
PO Box 579
Death Valley, CA 92328

phone 760.786.3243
fax 760.786.3246

Death Valley News Release

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Contact: Kat Eisenman, Public Information Officer
Phone: 760.786.3243
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Construction Delays and Area Closures at Badwater

Effective immediately traffic delays up to 30 minutes can be expected for visitors traveling Death Valley National Park's Badwater Road. "The road to Badwater is the most heavily driven road in the Park and this repaving project is overdue," states Superintendent JT Reynolds. Seventeen miles of roadway leading from California Highway 190 to Badwater - the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere - will be widened and repaved this winter and spring. In addition the visitor use facilities at the Badwater parking area, which includes a small parking lot and restroom, will be demolished and replaced with a new parking area, walkways, ramps, and a boardwalk. These facilities will improve the visitors' experience by better accommodating the increased visitation of the site. New exhibits will improve visitor understanding of the Badwater basin and the boardwalk will provide essential resource protection for the aquatic plant and animal life in the Badwater area. Effective January 6, 2003, the Badwater parking area, pools, and salt pan will be closed to all visitors to allow for construction of

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the new facilities. Vehicles over 25 feet will not be allowed on the Badwater Road through mid-April. The road will remain open to all other traffic.

The Badwater area is a prime destination point for park travelers. “We hope everyone will appreciate the work that needs to be completed and that visitor safety is the primary reason the area will be closed during construction. The deteriorated conditions that exist now compound the resource damage occurring in the Badwater area, and it also poses a safety concern for the visiting public. Please accept the park’s apology for any inconvenience this construction project poses and know that the end result will provide greater visitor enjoyment and better resource protection in the future,” states Superintendent Reynolds. Heavy equipment will be used in the demolition and rebuild of the site. A new retaining wall with wheelchair ramps will be built to provide access to the salt pan. To protect the Badwater pool, a specially designed boardwalk will also be constructed to help reduce the compaction of the ground and trampling of vegetation around the salt pools.

How do I get to the salt pan if Badwater is closed? There are a number of alternative areas you can explore the salt pan. The Devil’s Golf Course is an excellent location. Please be aware that the ground surface at the Golf Course consists of large, rough broken pieces of salt. Good sturdy boots are recommended if you wish to venture very far from the parking area. The West Side Road parallels the Badwater road on the west side of the valley. It is a gravel road with several wide spots to get out and explore from. It can be a bit rough, especially after heavy use. Drive slow and enjoy the views. Another great area to access the salt pan is four miles, and beyond, north of the Furnace Creek

Visitor Center. You can park anywhere off Highway 190 and hike out into the salt pan as far as you desire.

If you would like to know of other alternative park areas to visit, or would like to check on the progress of the Badwater project, check the park's web site at www.nps.gov/deva and go into the "In Depth" section. You can also stop at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center or any of the other park contact stations in and around the park and check with the staff about how best to visit Death Valley National Park. The Federal Highway Administration and the Fee Demonstration program, your park entrance and camping fees, are funding this project.

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